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MONTREAL

THE ROUND TABLE MOVEMENT

ITS PAST AND
FUTURE

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MONTREAL

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE ROUND
TABLE SOCIETY OF TORONTO, IN THE SENATE
CHAMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO,
ON NOVEMBER 18, 1913.

*The President, Mr. Mason, having opened the
meeting, the General Secretary said:*

It is not far from three years since the senior Canadian Round Table group was formed here in Toronto, and this is the first opportunity I have had of returning to report to you upon the progress made in our work. In the meantime, the senior group has, on its own initiative, called into existence six junior groups in Toronto and, as I am meeting many of you for the first time, I propose, in reporting on the progress of the inquiry, to explain shortly how it first came to be undertaken. It had its origin, as I think most of you know, in the disturbed conditions of South Africa. It is needless to enter here upon the causes which led to the South African war. For our present purpose it is sufficient to remind you that before it had been in progress many months, reverses had been sustained which changed the whole character of the struggle. It was no longer the rights of the Uitlanders in the Transvaal, but the existence of the Empire itself, which was seen to be threatened. In all parts of the Empire there were those who felt that to secure the safety of this world-wide Commonwealth was the supreme duty laid upon themselves; and to acquit themselves of that duty, men enlisted in thousands to fight side by side with their fellow-citizens in South Africa. After the war many of them remained to take part in the work of reconstituting the new territories of the Transvaal

and the Orange Free State as integral parts of the Empire.

In 1906, the British Government announced their intention of granting responsible government to both these colonies, but some of us who had remained there had studied the situation sufficiently to know that self-government was not really conferred on South Africa by establishing, in the Transvaal and the Free State, governments modelled after the pattern of those already existing in the Cape Colony and Natal.

I could illustrate this from any of the more important branches of government in South Africa, but I will content myself with taking the most important of all, that which relates to native affairs. The smallest of the four self-governing colonies was Natal, and it was also the one containing the fewest whites in proportion to the blacks. So small was the white population that it lived in a perpetual state of nervousness, due to a sense of the inadequacy of its own strength for the task imposed upon it of controlling a native population ten times greater than itself. Now it may be stated, with confidence, that no white community can ever succeed in the task of governing a subject race, except in so far as it is certain of its own strength for the work. Nor need one shrink from saying that this was the case in Natal; for if anyone questions the statement, one has only to refer to the report issued by a commission on native affairs, appointed by the Natal Government itself. It was not that the white people of Natal oppressed the blacks. The report to which I refer, shows that they worried them with a multitude of regulations and restrictions, which was the natural result of the nervous condition in which the white community lived.

Just when responsible government was about to be granted to the two inland colonies, a seri-

ous native rising occurred in Natal. Everyone in South Africa knew that unless it were promptly extinguished it must spread like fire to the natives of the Transvaal and the Cape Colony, and of Basutoland, where it would, therefore, threaten the safety of the Orange Free State. It was more than doubtful whether the tiny community of whites in Natal could extinguish the rebellion for themselves, and in the event of their failure, it would be necessary for the Imperial government to intervene with British troops and British money. Such intervention meant that the Imperial government must of necessity claim more control over the native policy, which had resulted in war and must, therefore, intervene from six thousand miles away, in the most delicate of all the domestic problems of South Africa. The necessity for such intervention in the past has always been the original source of misunderstanding between the Imperial authority and the South African governments and people. It was to prevent the spread of the conflagration and the necessity for such intervention, that the Transvaal promptly sent a contingent to the aid of Natal, and their example was followed by the government of Cape Colony. The rebellion was ended with bullet and bayonet at Mome Gorge.

The South African colonies had thus shown that they could unite to quench a native rebellion in blood. But some of us recognized that Mome Gorge, so far from being an achievement of which South Africans could boast, was a confession of their own failure in discharging the supreme duty laid on them of controlling the mutual relations of white and black. The first business of citizens in a free country is not to make war but to face the responsibility of preventing war, whether at home or abroad. Civilized men are not entitled to wait with folded

hands till war has broken out, and then join in shedding blood which might perhaps never have been shed at all, if they had faced in peace the tasks and burdens of maintaining peace. The whites in the rest of South Africa could no more ignore a rebellion in Natal than the inhabitants of a wooden village could ignore the outbreak of a fire in a single house. But Natal was a self-governing colony. Constitutionally, its government was just as independent of the Transvaal or of the Cape as of Canada or of Australia. Practically, as well as constitutionally, the white people in the rest of South Africa were no better able than the people of Canada or Australia to affect or improve the native administration of Natal; yet in the end the whole population of South Africa, black and white, was involved in the consequences of its failure. The whole population of the four colonies was involved in the penalties which followed from the errors of any one of them. The conclusion was obvious, that the whole population of South Africa must assume the power of preventing mistakes. Native policy—the relation of black and white—must be placed under the administration of one government, answerable to the people of South Africa as a whole. As I have stated already, the same conditions applied in all the important departments of South African affairs. The Imperial authority, in giving complete self-government to four different parts of South Africa, had given each of those parts the power to do things which prejudiced the interests of all the others and, what is still more important, to neglect things the efficient administration of which was essential to the peace, order and good government of the whole sub-continent. Really to obtain self-government, the people of South Africa had to create for themselves one national organ through which

national interests could be rendered amenable to national control.

Our business in South Africa was to help to close the South African problem, and faced by the aspect of the case which I have presented to you, it was our clear duty to urge upon others like ourselves who were men inheriting British traditions and blood that we should combine to establish a national government in South Africa. But we were under no illusions as to what the establishment of such a government would mean. The very generals we had fought in the field were now in power in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and everyone knew that the establishment of union would mean, what it has in fact meant, that the British in Cape Colony and in Natal would be brought as well as ourselves under the government of these very same men. The government we were asking our fellow-Britishers to erect and to obey would, as we knew, be a government of the ex-republican leaders—the men with whom we had fought for the continued existence of the Empire itself.

In urging this strange plea on our fellow-Britishers, there were many questions we had to meet and were able to answer, but to one which was often put to us we had no clear answer. So far as the relation of South Africa to the Empire was concerned, a large section of Britishers, in spite of the fact that they belonged to the opposite party, were prepared to trust the wisdom and temperance of General Botha. But there were others whom no one trusted in this matter and who might possibly succeed or supplant General Botha in the leadership of his people. Suppose the government of South Africa should pass to men who had not scrupled to declare that they were ready when the first occasion offered to claim for the South African people the right to settle for themselves,

and in their own interests, the question of peace or war, regardless of the interests of the rest of the Empire. In plain words, the realization of that claim meant that all South Africa, including Cape Colony and Natal, would be re-established in the same position as the republics of the Transvaal and the Free State had previously enjoyed. It was not inconceivable that the South African government we proposed to set up might consist of ministers pledged to views which were the negation of a principle which men from every part of the Empire had given their lives to vindicate. What, we were asked, would our own position be if the government which we were urging our fellow-countrymen to set up and obey, should claim the right to make peace or war on behalf of South Africa apart from the Empire, and call upon South Africans to support that claim with arms? What if that claim were resisted, as before, by the Imperial government? To which of the two governments was our ultimate allegiance due? Which of the two, in that event, did we propose to obey and upon which side should we again be found fighting, on the side of the South African or of the Imperial government? If in that event we were to fight, as we knew we should be fighting, on the side of the Empire, what became of our argument that South Africa needed a national government entitled to the obedience of all South Africa?

I say we had no answer to this question. So long as we had lived in Britain we had known what we were and to what state our allegiance was due. We were citizens of no mean city, of a Commonwealth containing a quarter of the human race, the greatest that the world had ever known. We were responsible with our lives and our means for maintaining it inviolate from end to end of the world, wherever it was threatened.

Whether on the frontiers of India, on the borders of Natal and Cape Colony, or on the coasts of England, was no concern of ours. When called upon by the Imperial government, we knew that we were responsible for defending it always and everywhere. We knew what our citizenship was and the duties it laid on us because we knew what was the state in respect of which those duties were laid. But now that we were to become the citizens of a self-governing Dominion, we were conscious of a dual citizenship. We were faced by the claims of a dual allegiance; and to the question why we should obey one rather than the other if the two should conflict, we had no reasoned answer to give.

Such were the questions which came from within South Africa, and from beyond the same question was suddenly presented in a different way. On the last day of the last national convention at Bloemfontein, when the union became an accomplished fact, a momentous announcement was cabled to South Africa. The Foreign Secretary had plainly told the British Parliament and people that the security of the British Empire was threatened from without and the Liberal government had invited the Dominions to a conference to discuss with them the means by which the safety of the Empire might be maintained. It was an announcement which compelled us to ask what sacrifices we were called on to make in order to secure the peace and safety of the Empire. In Britain we had been called upon to face such questions but there no serious difficulty was presented. On the government in power there rested a final responsibility for conducting the policy which determined the issues of peace and war. In the light of actual experience of the external forces with which it was faced, that government, with the aid of its experts, was in a position to decide

what sacrifice of national wealth and armaments was required to maintain the peace of the Empire. The programme of the two parties might differ by a few millions, more or less, as to the amount which it was necessary to sacrifice in order to secure the pax Britannica. But the responsibility of office always brought every government to the same conclusion for the plain reason that the British government was face to face with the facts. It learned by dealing with the facts at first hand to gauge with some certainty what forces must be called into being from within, in order to counterbalance forces that were pressing on the Empire from without. But the government created for South Africa, however competent to deal with its internal affairs, had no contact with the forces pressing on the Empire from without. It was burdened by no responsibility for them and had no means of learning at first hand what they were or how they should be met. How then was it to tell us what sacrifices we were called on to make in order to secure the safety of the Empire at large? We asked ourselves what was the measure of our responsibility in South Africa for foreign affairs and realized that we had no principles upon which to act. Just as we were no longer able to say what was our citizenship or where our allegiance was due, so we were unable to explain to ourselves what were the sacrifices that it imposed upon us in respect of the first duty of civilized men, that of maintaining the peace of the world.

Not to know or to be able to explain what kind of citizenship was ours seemed to us an intolerable condition and one likely to lead to disaster as had a similar condition in South Africa, so long as its citizens were uncertain whether their first duty lay to South Africa or merely to the particular colony in which they

lived. We determined, therefore, to investigate the whole subject and not rest from inquiry until we had discovered what, in fact, as citizens of a Dominion we now were; whether that citizenship was one with which free men should rest content and, if not, what were the changes in our condition that we were called upon to seek.

In carrying out this project our first step was to send a deputation to Canada. Three of us came here in 1909 because Canadians were the people who had lived longest in the same position as that we had just attained in South Africa. We had little difficulty in finding out what Canadians thought and everywhere they received us with friendship and hospitality and expressed their views with perfect freedom. Rather I should say they expressed their view for nearly everyone told us the same thing. We met, at most, but one man who held that Canada should look forward to separation from the Empire. The general view was that the Empire was a unity upon which the sun must never set. It was always to remain one and indivisible. The people of Canada and of the Dominions were indeed to assume through their own governments a control of their external affairs equal to that possessed by the people of the United Kingdom. Some insisted that they had already assumed such control. The existing governments, whether in London, Ottawa, Wellington, Melbourne or Pretoria, were all to stand on an equal footing, side by side, severally administering and controlling the external, as well as the internal, affairs of their respective countries, but maintaining the unity of the Empire by co-operation and also by loyalty rendered to one crown and one flag. In a word, the difficulties which presented themselves to us were academic.

Well, gentlemen, we returned whence we came. We wrote this view down, and having written it down we analyzed it and tested it in the light of facts. We were asked, as I say, by some to believe that the Dominion government at Ottawa exercised a full, complete and final control over the issues of peace and war; but in South Africa we had only to look at the republican government which had existed at Pretoria ten years before to see that the Union government, the counterpart of the Dominion government now established there, was in no such position. The people of South Africa did not exercise, as half of them had exercised ten years before, an actual* control over the issues of peace and war. If London declared war, Pretoria was at war; and as long as London maintained peace, Pretoria was at peace, and that condition would remain unaltered until not only London but the governments of foreign powers had been notified to the contrary and had accepted the notification. But that was not all. On analysis we failed to see how, until such notification had been given and accepted, the government at Pretoria could recover such control. In the former republics there were several leaders and many to follow them who were ready for such a solution, but it was a solution which meant the undoing of all those ideals for which the people of the Empire had fought, suffered and won, in South Africa. In a word, the Canadian view on analysis failed to help us in our dilemma, whichever way we tried to work it out. . . . It meant that a Dominion must either acquiesce in its present position of dependence or face the alternative of independence. We

* The provision in the Treaty of London depriving the South African Republic of the right of diplomatic representation at foreign capitals, other than that of the Orange Free State, was, of course, inoperative in practice. Nothing could prevent the Transvaal Government sending representatives to Europe, and in fact it did so.

were still landed upon one or other of its two horns. There was, in fact, an Imperial problem, the most vital of all political problems, which had not been thought out and needed to be sifted to the bottom: Accordingly, we worked out our statement of the problem, printed it, put the document in front of men like yourselves, in New Zealand, Australia, in England, as well as in Canada, and asked them to join with us in an attempt to answer a riddle, the right solution of which was just as vital to them as to us. The invitation was eagerly accepted, and that was the origin of the Round Table movement.

Before continuing to describe the course of that inquiry, I wish to say a word as to the attitude of mind in which it was undertaken. In Canada we were told, not once or twice, but many times, that the problems of Empire were logically insoluble. You, yourselves, will have often heard that phrase, and if you think of it for a moment you will see that this attitude of blank negation is simply a by-path which leads the pilgrim only to Doubting Castle and leaves him there in the grip of its keeper, Giant Despair. Now I believe that this attitude of negation is largely due to false ways of approaching the problem. People are always asking themselves and arguing what Canada ought to do, what Britain ought to do, what the Dominions ought to do. Neither you, I, nor any of us singly, can be sure of determining the course to be taken by any community numbering millions of men. There is only one thing in the world which a man can determine with certainty and that is his own conduct; and it is for that, and that alone, that he is responsible in the long run. I want to suggest to you that if each man will cease arguing what Canada or Britain ought to do, and will ask only what he himself ought to be and to do, the problem will begin to lose some

of its difficulties. If a Canadian or Englishman will settle that in his own mind first of all he will quickly discover what, so far as he is concerned, Canada or Britain should be, what their relations to each other and the Empire should become, and what, in seeking these ends, he himself is called upon to do.

That I would suggest to you as the standpoint from which this problem is to be approached. That, at any rate, was the way in which it presented itself to us. The question before us in 1909 was what share South Africa should assume in the maintenance of the Empire as a whole. But it was not given to us or to any individual to decree what the people of South Africa should do or leave undone. That, in a free country, was something which only the prevailing opinion of the majority could decide. But there is no one who cannot influence the public mind, however little, provided that he first knows his own. To know what he thinks and, above all, why he thinks it, is the first business of free men in public affairs. His second and last duty is to persuade as many others as he can to think with him. His first duty is inquiry and thought, his second is action, and the inquiry we proposed was from first to last taken with a view to action.

I want you to hold this in mind in considering what follows. We pointed out to our friends here, and in the other Dominions, that the problems before us embraced them all and concerned them as much as us. We pointed out that no solution of it could be attempted in any one of the Dominions without, in some way or other, prejudicing the solution to be found in all the others. No inquiry over a problem like this, therefore, could be either exhaustive or final unless it were undertaken jointly by the citizens of all the different countries involved in the

issue. Groups of men whose acquaintance we sought in all these countries were asked by us to join in the inquiry.

Now it was obvious from the outset that all these different groups would never be able to meet in one place. It followed, therefore, that the inquiry must be conducted by means of documents. As after visiting Canada we had documented, in a crude and tentative fashion, our own view of the problem and its solution, we suggested that our colleagues in the other Dominions should document their criticisms of our view, not only individually but jointly. We asked, in a word, not only for the individual criticism of each member, but for reports compiled, where possible, by the groups themselves. The proposal was that all these documents should then be printed and circulated privately for the general information of those concerned in the inquiry, and that some one should then sit down and prepare a careful report of the whole problem, showing, first of all, what the problem was and also in what direction its proper solution would be found. The conception we had in our minds was that of a royal commission. The idea was that all the Round Table groups might be able to agree upon a report, and having agreed would then proceed to take whatever steps seemed best to give effect to it. From first to last, I repeat, the inquiry was never to be treated as an end in itself, but was undertaken by men who wished to understand the duties laid upon them by their citizenship in order to discharge them. Research and thought were believed to be vitally necessary; but action, not thought, was the final end in view.

That was the strategic conception upon which our whole enterprise was based. That term "strategic" is borrowed from the art of war,

but it applies to every department of human activity. A commander-in-chief, in going to war, sits down and with a map of the theatre of operations before him, sees what forces he has and where they are. He then decides where he would wish them to be in order that he may be master of the whole field of operations and so win the war. He next decides by what routes they can best and most surely reach their ultimate destination. That is what soldiers call "strategy." But having first decided the strategy of the campaign, he and his staff endeavour to foresee where and when on those routes the enemy will be met and battles will be fought. So far as they can they will work out the tactics to be followed by each general in charge of each army when coming into action, knowing, however, that these tactics will have to be modified by each of those generals to meet contingencies which the commander-in-chief and his staff cannot foresee. The vitally important thing is that their larger principles of action, that is to say, their strategy, may be conceived on lines so sound that they do not need to be revised in the course of the campaign. A general whose strategy is sound can afford to make many mistakes in tactics. No amount of tactical skill or resource will avail to save a general whose strategic plans are wrongly conceived. Now this distinction of strategy from tactics is just as true when applied to projects of peace as to projects of war. When you are projecting a railway, the gauge you choose is a strategic question. When once you have committed yourself to any particular gauge you cannot alter it without recasting your whole system from top to bottom. Whether you equip your lines with four-wheeled coaches or with eight-wheeled bogies is a question of tactics. If you figure for cheap four-wheeled rolling stock you can change to the

bogies if further experience should prove that they are better suited to the kind of traffic you have to handle.

The conception upon which we started was that in this problem of citizenship, exhaustive inquiry was needed before action could usefully be taken by anyone concerned, and that inquiry, to be worth anything, must be shared by men who saw the problem from its different points of view. That was the strategic conception, and I believe it was an absolutely sound one, and I see no reason for altering it now or in the future. In order to realize it, it was necessary to obtain the collaboration of men who looked at the problem from the point of view of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Britain, and also of the great dependencies like India. But even that was not enough. In all these countries there are different parties with different points of view, and it was, therefore, necessary that representatives of all these parties should be included. Now, gentlemen, it was easier to talk of doing this than to do it.

You know that when men get into a fight they will seize any weapon that comes to their hands. And so it is in politics. When men get into a political fight, that is to say, start electioneering, there will always be some who will yield to the temptation to appeal to the deepest and most sacred ideals of the electorate, in order to obtain their support for projects which have little or nothing to do with these ideals. You know how often, in elections, an appeal is made to religion when there is no real religious issue at stake. Now I have sojourned long and in many parts of the self-governing Dominions of the British Empire, and in what I am going to say, I will ask you to believe that I am measuring my words, and am not attempting to appeal to the gallery. I believe that attachment to this world-

wide Commonwealth established by the labour of our fathers is, in all these Dominions but one, the strongest and deepest political instinct in the hearts of a vast majority. I say in all but one because I promised you that I would measure my words. In one of these Dominions you must remember that less than twelve years ago something like half the people were involved in a struggle which, had it been successful, would have laid that vast structure in ruins, and I think that it is too early to expect that it should yet be as dear to them as to us who have grown up under it and whose fathers made it. But whether in Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand or Newfoundland, that sentiment of devotion to this tremendous, but as yet, half realized ideal is, in my belief, the deepest of all political instincts.

You are fond of saying that your parties are not divided by any real question of principle. I do not quite agree with that view. The distinction which divides Liberal and Conservative is neither English, nor Canadian, nor British, but human. Wherever free institutions exist there will appear parties which correspond, more or less, to these two different types of mind. It was so in Germany and there, for reasons into which I need not enter, the Liberals were more closely associated than the Conservatives with the idea of achieving unity for the German race. In our own case, it is usually, though not always, Conservative parties which stand to gain by an appeal to the deep-seated sentiment which exists in favour of preserving the unity of the British Empire. That sentiment is not the monopoly of any party, but is widely spread and deeply rooted in the adherents of every one of them. Largely owing to political accidents it has more often suited Conservative politicians than Liberals to try and make use of it for the

purpose of winning elections. I am not criticizing or blaming but I am simply stating facts equally true of Canada and Britain which your own memories will tell you are facts. The inevitable consequence has been a certain attitude of suspicion towards the subject on the part of Liberals. I say, frankly and boldly, that in carrying out this project of inquiry and in making it a genuine one, our greatest difficulty has been to overcome this suspicion, and to convince Liberals that behind our enterprise is not some political dodge or trap. But I go on to say that we have convinced them, and if we have succeeded in making our inquiry a genuine one it is because men of all shades of opinion have taken part in it. I want you to hold this in mind for I am coming back to it later on.

I have said that our first step was to collect and compare, in documentary form, the views of the individuals and groups engaged in this inquiry, and if anyone will examine the stout volume known as the Annotated Memorandum I question whether he will be able to suggest any important point of view which has not found expression in its pages. The next step was to prepare or draft a report on the whole subject for submission to the groups. Some one person had to be made responsible for its preparation and that task was laid upon myself. When I was last in this country I undertook it, and I led the members of the original groups to suppose that I could prepare such a document in about six months. That estimate of the time necessary was absurdly wrong and all I can do is to express my deep regret for the mistake I made. It simply shows how little I myself, who had devoted some study to the subject, had grasped the magnitude of the problem before us. It took me more than six months to collect and digest the criticisms of all the groups;

for in order to grasp them thoroughly I had to spend several months on making an accurate index to them, which you will find at the end of the Annotated Memorandum. As I made that index I realized the overwhelming nature of the task I had undertaken and if you will examine it you will find that it is practically a complete compendium of all the points that can be raised on the Imperial problem. For the first time it really came home to me that I had undertaken to make a survey of a political structure which included a quarter of mankind and which included in that quarter all levels of civilization and races and families of men scattered among countries in every part of the globe. I realized that before anyone could attempt to show what kind of duty was imposed on men who lived in the shelter of this vast and complex state he must first discover and interpret what that state was and for what it stood. I had made a grave miscalculation. Not six months but more like three years was needed for the task I had undertaken, and to accomplish it in that time it was necessary to act less as a draughtsman than as an editor, and to enlist the expert assistance of as many other members of the Round Table as possible. The report, of which two instalments have already been laid before you and of which the remainder will, I hope, be before you within a year from now, is the work not of one but of many hands. The material is for the most part prepared already and needs only to be put into shape and printed, and I have come here now because I am in a position to give you an accurate forecast of what that report will contain. I want to give you that forecast in order that you may consider in advance what course to take when the report has been laid before you. The report is divided into three volumes, and each volume will be sent you in several instal-

ments. Now do not jump down my throat and say that the document is much too long. The three volumes will not, I think, be anything like so big as those containing Bryce's account of the American Commonwealth, and when compared with the British Commonwealth, the American Commonwealth is a small, simple and uniform proposition. The first volume of the report deals with the past, and is an attempt to show how and why the British Commonwealth came into being. You already have two instalments of it before you. The next one is already in the press and may be expected here by the end of the year. The fourth instalment is drafted, but not finished, and will be in the press a few weeks after I return to England. That will complete the first volume.

The second volume deals with the present. It is a survey of each of the different countries included in the great Commonwealth, conducted with a view to seeing what kind of community it has become by reason of its position and also to gauge what its position is.

The object of this second volume is that those engaged in the inquiry may have before them a statement of the contemporary facts in handling the Imperial problem. It is not enough for a Canadian to know the standpoint of Canada. He must also have made some attempt to grasp the conditions and standpoints of the other self-governing Dominions, and, what is of still greater importance, of India and the dependencies. The past is strewn with proposals for solving the Imperial problem off-hand, without reference to the subject dependencies. These dependencies include a population of 369,000,000. The white people of the Empire are about 65,000,000, and it needs no argument to show that any attempt to solve the problems of the Commonwealth which ignores

six-sevenths of the people who live under its shelter is doomed to failure from the outset. The duty laid on the white people of the Commonwealth to provide for their more backward fellow-citizens a better present and a better future than they are, in fact, able to provide for themselves, is the biggest of all reasons for the existence of this stupendous Commonwealth, and the problem involved must be measured and adequately understood before you can begin to consider what the future of this Commonwealth can be, and should be. Before we attempt to solve this greatest of all political problems we must get before us the salient facts out of which it arises. The surveys of all these different countries, self-governing and dependent, to be included in the second volume, is, I think you will agree, a feature essential to any report which attempts to deal with the problem as a whole. These surveys have been, for the most part, prepared already. The tentative studies of Canada, Australia and New Zealand have all been submitted to the groups for criticism and it merely remains to revise them in the light of the criticisms which have been made. The studies of India, Egypt, and of the great African dependencies, have already been prepared by men closely acquainted with these countries and qualified to speak of them. Those of South Africa and Britain are in the course of preparation. The West Indies and Pacific islands can be left aside for the present for we are not writing a guidebook or a gazetteer. The problem involved in the governing of the dependencies can, for our purpose, be adequately studied by a survey of India, Egypt and the African protectorates.

These studies in Volume II will show the internal structure of this vast Commonwealth as it is in such a way as to bring out its elements

of strength and weakness. But there is another class of facts which must be faced before the report goes on to deal with the future. The British Commonwealth as a whole must be viewed in its relation to the world outside it. The second volume will end with a study of its foreign relations. The subject is being dealt with by one of the very few people qualified to handle it and also not prevented from doing so by the responsibilities of official position. In this final chapter of Volume II an attempt will be made to show what are the external forces, difficulties and dangers with which the British Commonwealth, as a whole, is obliged to cope.

The third part of the report will deal with the future. The first thing I have to say about it is that it will be prepared in such a way that it will stand alone and can be read by itself by those who cannot afford the time to follow the track of the inquiry through the first and second volumes. Part III will therefore open with an introduction in which the positions to which the inquiry has led in the two previous volumes will be summarily stated. We shall be entitled to give certain results in a few words, succinctly and even dogmatically, because the reasoning upon which they rest has been carefully worked out in the previous volumes. I say we can be dogmatic, because people who question these conclusions can be asked to go back and examine the facts and the reasonings of the previous volumes upon which these results have been based.

Having summarized these general results, I submit that we are then in a position to come to close quarters with the real issue at stake. What kind of citizenship is it that each of us is called upon to achieve? That I suggest is the real question for each of us who have thought it worth while to devote time to the Round Table

inquiry. Let us first be clear what we desire to be, and then and not till then shall we begin to understand what we are called upon to do. What in plain words are the alternatives open to us? If we can once enumerate them you will see at a glance that a great and important step in this inquiry has been achieved. Now I believe it can be demonstrated that there are four possible alternatives and four only. I believe that everyone, or nearly everyone, can be brought to agree on that if they can succeed in agreeing on nothing else. If you will bear with me a little longer, I believe that I can convince you that there cannot possibly be more than four.

(1) In the first place it can be argued that the present position can always remain unchanged. It can be argued that the *status quo* (an ugly but convenient term) should be and also can be forever maintained. But to realize the meaning of this first alternative we must be quite clear as to what the *status quo* is, and that is a mere question of facts which can be tested, stated and placed beyond the region of dispute. As things are, the issues of peace or war, those which in the last instance decide what communities are to be recognized as international states, and therefore what citizenship in each of those states is to mean, the last and greatest of all political issues, are at present controlled by an Imperial government called to office by a majority of voters resident in the United Kingdom only. So far as the people in the Dominions are concerned, the management of the policy which determines whether they are at peace or war is in the hands of ministers called to office, maintained in office and liable to be dismissed from it without any kind of reference, direct or indirect, to themselves. That is, I think, a correct account of the *status quo*.

(2) The second alternative is that the Dominions should terminate the right of the Imperial government to declare war or peace on their behalf. And here again it is necessary to consider the precise steps which are necessary in order to effect this change. The Imperial government must of course be notified that it is no longer entitled to include the Dominions in a declaration of peace or war with a foreign power. But that of itself is not enough. It is of far greater importance that this notification should be made to foreign powers who are at least as directly concerned in learning the new condition of affairs as the Imperial government itself. The people of the Dominions thereafter would enter into direct relations with these powers through ministers of their own, who must send ambassadors to represent them and receive foreign ambassadors on their return. The mutual reception of diplomatic agents is the accepted sign of a state of peace between independent powers. Their withdrawal or dismissal is the recognized form which a declaration of war inevitably takes. This second alternative is independence and of all the possible alternatives it is the clearest and easiest to state.

So far as Canadians are concerned there is of course the alternative of absorption in the United States, but to avoid misunderstanding let me say at once that I am including it under the heading of independence because I am using that word in its negative sense as meaning separation from the British Commonwealth. Here again the first necessary step would be a notification to foreign powers that Canadians were no longer involved in a declaration of peace or war on the part of the Imperial government at Westminster. That declaration having been once made it would cease to be an Imperial question at all whether Canadians desired to conduct

their foreign relations through a government at Ottawa or through a government at Washington. A declaration to foreign powers of their independence of the Imperial government would be a necessary preliminary in either case.

(3) The third alternative advanced is that which, I fancy, is held by the largest number of people. They reject altogether the idea of separating from the Empire. On the other hand, they hold that people in the Dominions who exercise the vote must control their own foreign, no less than their own domestic affairs. They must, in fact, have the same control over the policy which determines peace and war as the voter in Britain. Some of them contend that through their Dominion governments they exercise such control already. Others consider that those governments have not, as yet, acquired such control, but hold that they must sooner or later assume it. But when they have assumed it they are to remain united, partly by retaining a common crown and a common flag, and partly by the voluntary practice of co-operation. Each government is to conduct the foreign affairs of its own Dominion in consultation with all the rest. When war is declared they are to declare it together, and war is to be ended by their declaring peace together. The respective strength of the forces that each is to provide is to be determined on principles to be settled in consultation. This third alternative may be described as voluntary co-operation.

(4) The fourth alternative is that there should be created for the United Kingdom a government which exercises powers which are the exact equivalent to those exercised by the governments already established in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Newfoundland. Such a domestic government in the United Kingdom would have no more respon-

sibility in the control of foreign policy or of the few but all-important functions which are inseparable from the conduct of foreign affairs than is now enjoyed by the Dominion governments. These few but all important functions would then have to be entrusted to a general government over which a Canadian, an Australian, New Zealander, South African or Newfoundlander would exercise exactly the same control as an Englishman, Scotchman, Welshman or Irishman.

These are the four alternatives which I have been able to extract from an exhaustive study of the masses of reports and memoranda sent in by the Round Table groups and their individual members. If anyone can think of any alternative other than these four, it is essential to the inquiry that he should state what it is and show why it cannot be brought under one or other of the four alternatives which I have named.

Until that is done, we are entitled to assume that this classification is exhaustive. Now as the person responsible for preparing the text of the report, I think I can state all these four alternatives with accuracy, but for the purpose we have in view, it is not enough merely to state the alternatives. From first to last, the object of this inquiry has been that those engaged in it might arrive at some clear conception of the duty imposed upon them as citizens, and unless we attempt to discover the relative value of these four alternatives we shall have failed in the main purpose which, throughout, we have held in view. Now from what I have said you can see plainly enough that the conclusion to which I myself have been led is that two of the four alternatives I have named are not real ones. I can state fairly enough that there are people who believe that the Dominions can forever re-

main in their present stage of dependence on the government of Britain for the conduct of all their external affairs, but I could not possibly undertake to justify that belief. In the interests of truth, the task of justifying that belief should be undertaken by someone who holds it, in a separate report.

The third alternative is co-operation. Now I am not sure that I am qualified to state this alternative or to state it beyond a certain point. I can go so far as to say that a vast number of people believe that a Dominion government can assume the same control over foreign affairs as is exercised by the British government, and yet maintain the present Imperial connection, but I am utterly unable to show how they can assume it. Some wise man once remarked that a member of the Anglo-Saxon race always feels that he has solved a problem when he has given it a Latin or Greek name. To me that is exactly what people seem to be doing when they declare that the problems of Empire can be solved by co-operation. In the interests of this inquiry, someone who believes in the alternative of co-operation should undertake to show in short Saxon words how a Dominion government can assume a genuine responsibility for the issues of peace and war equivalent to that exercised by the British government and how that position, when achieved, will differ, in fact, from the second alternative of independence. Personally, I get no help by using the word alliance. The Transvaal and Free State republics formed the closest alliance possible between two governments, each of which retained a real responsibility in conducting the external affairs of the two communities for which they severally spoke. But when the Transvaal declared war foreign governments were not entitled to assume that the Free State was at war until either the Free

State government or the British government had notified that the condition of war had broken out. I have said that an exponent of co-operation must show how that alternative can be differentiated from the second alternative of independence, but such an exponent must also show how it can be realized without acquiescing in the first alternative, that of dependence. The change proposed must be one, I submit, which imposes upon the Dominion government a genuine responsibility for the conduct of foreign affairs, for controlling the course of events which determine peace and war long before war itself begins to threaten. I say, without flinching, that all such schemes as I have ever seen for solving the problem by co-operation really leave that responsibility where it has always rested, on the representatives of the people of the United Kingdom.

Now all the hard things I have said of the alternative of co-operation apply to the fourth alternative, which is best described as organic union. For the purpose of this inquiry it is no less essential to show in short Saxon words what organic union means and what changes would have to be completed before it is realized. That I believe can be done, and I believe that I am qualified to do it. I believe that I can show that the joint government of external affairs by the people of all the self-governing Dominions is a genuine alternative, and by a genuine alternative I mean a possible alternative. I wish to say now that having devoted myself for years to this subject and to no other, I believe that it is not only a possible alternative towards which the whole British Commonwealth can move, but that failure to attain it will prove the greatest catastrophe which has ever overtaken the human race. I said that it was our business to value different alternatives. I have confessed to you

my conviction that disruption or organic union are the only two genuine alternatives, but if the Round Table inquiry is really to fulfil its purpose, we should not close our labours until we have done everything which can be done to make it possible, not only for ourselves but for others to decide, each for himself, which is the right one. Now I know that I am not qualified to state the case for independence. There are those included in our circle who believe in that alternative. I am glad that it is so, because without their presence that circle would be incomplete; but what I am here to urge is that they should set to work now to state that alternative for themselves and to show how it can be attained. I do not think that task is difficult because it is a genuine alternative. But I think also that they should set to work to put down in black and white how, in their opinion, the people in the Dominions and in Britain can best realize the duty laid upon them as citizens, by seeking to place all these communities in the same relation to each other and to Britain as exists between Britain and the United States, or between the United States and Canada itself. That is why I have come here now to forecast the trend of the report which I am drafting for submission to you.

Perhaps you may say that my first business as draughtsman was to prepare a document which would meet with general acceptance. I wish to say plainly that such a document would, in my opinion, not only be useless but mischievous. Some years of study has convinced me that on this problem there are certain real and irreconcilable differences of opinion. If so, the first business of any genuine inquiry is to analyze and classify these differences and that we have done. There are those who will say that there are as many as three or four paths open

to citizens of the British Commonwealth, and I want to see that analysis justified by those who hold that opinion. My own belief, which I have plainly stated, is that a genuine analysis of the four possible alternatives will result in showing that they are really reducible to two. It is obviously impossible that I should endeavour to prepare a report which will harmonize these two when experience and reason both seem to me to point to the fact that they are irreconcilable and that our duty is to choose between them and to choose in time. My business, as I conceive it, therefore, is to draft a report in which, after weighing the evidence and arguments of both sides, I show as clearly as I can the choice to which they point. I do not flatter myself that any report which I can draft, nor do I think that a report can be drafted, which will convince three hundred or four hundred men scattered throughout the British Empire. Nor do I think that I am, or that anyone else is, infallible. Therefore, I am anxious that someone who still, after several years of Round Table study, believes in independence or any other alternative should begin now to prepare an alternative report in favour of his view. I submit that the Round Table organization will have done an invaluable work if it succeeds in elucidating the possible alternatives, and places before its members, and afterwards before our fellow-citizens in each of these countries, the best that can be said for each of them.

Now what are you to do with these reports when you have them before you? In discussing this question please remember that our original conception, what I have called our strategic conception, was to inquire first of all and to act afterwards, and not to attempt organized action until we had completed inquiry. Nothing in our subsequent experience has led me to doubt the

soundness of that plan. Originally, however, our idea was to work like a royal commission. Some one person was appointed to prepare a draft report; the groups were then to consider that report and, having agreed upon it, were to take what steps might to them seem fit for giving effect to it. Now I am prepared to admit at once that this particular method of action may need to be revised in the light of experience. To begin with, we cannot really work like a commission because we can never all meet under one roof to discuss the report as a whole, to discuss amendments to the report or to divide like a deliberative body, after discussion. This report, dealing as it does with the greatest of all political questions, must, as I said, be a formidable document but I believe that I can reduce the vital conclusions for the purpose of discussion to the compass of a single page. Now, suppose that having laid that report before you, I come to Canada and meet the Montreal groups, first of all, and proceed to discuss these resolutions with them, it is more than likely that after discussing them they will want to amend them, and for the sake of argument let it be supposed that a majority of the groups accept them with certain amendments which do not alter their general tendency. With these amended resolutions I come on to Toronto, and what am I to say when I get there? The Toronto groups are as much entitled as those of Montreal, if they accept the resolutions at all, to modify them before accepting them. Now, given time, it is not inconceivable to me that if I could post backwards and forwards between the different Canadian groups, or if delegates from all the Canadian groups could be assembled in one place, a majority in all of them might agree on the wording of the resolutions; but it would take a long time. However, I might

eventually be in a position to start from Vancouver with a set of resolutions accepted by the great body of the Round Table groups in Canada, and a month later I might re-start the process in Australia. You will see at once that at every step the task becomes more difficult. I should, in practice, simply have to take the Canadian resolutions to Australia and ask them to take them or leave them. The process of amendment would be absolutely impossible, and the same would occur when I reached New Zealand, South Africa and got back to Britain. I should require some magic which I do not possess in order to charm into verbal unanimity several hundred men, all accustomed to think freely for themselves. But even if I had that magic, even if at the end of a long journey we could all, in our several countries, produce the report as an exact and accurately formulated creed, precisely and verbally expressing the views of all or a majority of the members, the public on reading it would feel that an agreement so obtained, so unanimous, had in it something that was artificial. There would be an air of unreality about it.

But there is another practical difficulty in giving effect to our original conception. I have shown already how vitally necessary it was to any genuine project of inquiry that men of all shades of view should be induced to take part in it. I have recognized the difficulty which arose from the atmosphere of suspicion which envelops the subject vaguely called imperialism, and have not hesitated to admit that there has, in the past, been a ground for that suspicion. The most ardent imperialist will not, I think, deny that all over the Empire, politicians, some of whom had little true imperialism in their hearts, have not scrupled for electoral purposes to appeal to imperialism, simply because they

knew it lay so deep in the hearts of the people. Now if this inquiry has been made a genuine one it is because men have been found among the ranks of socialism, radicalism and labour, to put these suspicions aside and take part in it. They realized that inquiry was needed, and saw that, from the nature of the case, no one who took part in it was committed in advance to any particular view. Their action in doing so has imposed a heavy obligation on those of us who had the establishment of a genuine inquiry at heart. The Annotated Memorandum contains, as I have said, every sort and kind of view that can be expressed on this subject, and that in itself is proof of what we owe to those who have made it possible to conduct a really catholic inquiry into a subject which was something of a bugbear to them. Their co-operation has given to the Round Table groups an authority and prestige which these groups could never have acquired without them.

If you look at the original proposals which we circulated in print when these groups were formed, you will see that the groups were formed, first for inquiry, and afterwards for action. It is true that everyone who has joined in the inquiry must have known that inquiry was the means only, and that action was the ultimate end in view. But obligations like these are better recognized in the spirit than in the letter. It is, you will agree, a matter of crucial importance that no one who has been engaged in this inquiry should look back to it with any sense of unfairness.

Now supposing that the majority of the groups in each Dominion agreed to adopt the report as I have foreshadowed it and then, with the prestige of the Round Table behind them, proceeded to advocate it as their creed, the minority might very well feel that their co-

operation had been used to give prestige to an organization which, after they had retired from it, was being used to propagate views directly contrary to their own. That is the view expressed to me by several of these members and it is one that I think is entitled to your consideration.

I want to put these difficulties in front of you now in order that you may consider them and how best they may be overcome. I am also going to offer you some suggestions which have been laid before me here, for you to think over. I have indicated to you the trend of the report I am drafting. The successive instalments of that report will continue to reach you until, as I hope, within twelve months from this, the complete document will be before you. As soon as possible after I reach England, I will endeavour to sketch out Part III, the part dealing with the future, the part, therefore, containing the conclusions, in order that members may be considering it in advance. Meantime, the successive chapters of Part II will continue to reach you as they are completed. But the advance draft of Part III will give some time for consultation and will enable everyone to see what its tendency is. It will also enable those who have been led to opposite conclusions to state their reasons for differing from it, and to explain the alternative course which they think should be followed, whether that course be independence or any other. In this way we should get a reasoned expression of every view.

But this, you will say, does not meet the practical difficulty which arises whenever the author of the report submits it for adoption to the Round Table groups. Well, I recognize that it does not, but what I want to suggest to you is this. I submit to you that when you have winnowed the essential principles from the details

which cover and conceal them, you will find it impossible to discover more than four different alternative courses which citizens in the British Empire can follow. My own conviction, which I have not concealed, is that on analysis these four are really reducible to two, but I am sure that you will find that there are at most the four which I have described as the *status quo*, as independence, as co-operation and as organic union, respectively. The basic principles which divide men's opinions everywhere are really very few and every man who starts out to express them would express them in a different way and in different words. As Kipling says, "There are nine and sixty ways of constructing tribal lays, and every single one of them is right." I have told you that my report will point to organic union. There are, at any rate, some dozens of my colleagues in the Round Table who hold the same view as myself but it is obvious that no one of them would have drafted the same report in the same words, and this is equally true of those who favour the alternatives which I have described as the *status quo*, as independence, and as co-operation. If you once agree, as I believe you can, that all possible views are ultimately reducible to one or other of these four, I think you will also agree that the best thing to be done is to get each of these views reasoned out by someone who holds them. To put the matter in a nutshell, I am suggesting to you that an inquiry like ours, including men in all the Dominions and in all the parties, who have been exchanging views for three or four years, in documentary form when they could not meet, and who have met to discuss these views when they could meet, will have fulfilled its object if they succeed in enumerating all the policies which can be thought of and have produced a reasoned justi-

fication of each of them. I suggest to you, that in each of the communities concerned, the adherents of each view should find no insuperable difficulty in finding one of themselves and entrusting to him the task of expressing that view. I am suggesting for your consideration whether the work of inquiry undertaken by the Round Table organization will not be adequately fulfilled if the organization undertakes to produce these reports as they are completed and submit them to the public, together with an account of why and how this inquiry was undertaken.

If this suggestion should commend itself to your judgment, the adherents of each view, who have taken part in the inquiry, will then be free to combine in whatever way, and under whatever title they like to assume, to give effect to the creed at which they have arrived.

I should like to stop here but I cannot with safety. I must, before sitting down, say a word to you with regard to the period of action which has from first to last been the real end we have had in view. A charge with which I have frequently been met is, that we are trying to precipitate the issue, and what I am going to say now is addressed solely to members who, however few, already share the view to which I myself have been led, that sooner or later people in the Dominions will find that only two alternatives are possible. That view is, as I have told you plainly, that unless people in the Dominions and in the United Kingdom so revise the constitutions under which they live as to separate the conduct of their foreign affairs from the domestic administration of each country, and to place these affairs under the joint control of the people in all the self-governing Dominions, they will find themselves severally assuming a separate control; they will find themselves, in fact, assuming the status of

independence. Now, do not let those of us who hold that view flatter ourselves into the illusion that it is understood by any large body of our fellow-citizens. And because it is not understood it is not held by them. The vast majority, in my opinion, assume like the vast majority of people in every community, that as they have done and as they have been, so they may continue to do and to be. If a constitutional revision is indeed necessary, it is inconceivable that it could be effected without the deliberate consent of the majority of the electors in each of the countries concerned. Now, personally, I should view with alarm any attempt to force this question for decision in the immediate future, simply because I do not believe that the vast majority have grasped the issue at stake. Their own place in this world-wide Commonwealth they value beyond price. They realize, though dimly, that it is a State greater than a Nation, the central arch of human society upon which the races and nations of five continents are poised. But they do not see how perilous a structure it is so long as its piers rest on foundations no wider than the British Isles. They do not see that if it is to last, its buttresses must be spread to the New World as well as to the Old. My unquenchable belief is that they can be made to see it and be made to see it in time, and that when they do, they, like their predecessors, will make but one choice. I think more of Freedom than to believe that men bred under it, when once they realize that to them is given the power to save from incalculable disaster the whole of human society, will shrink from the responsibility cast upon them. The American colonies were never offered the choice of assuming that full responsibility; no one ever unravelled or laid before them the real issues at stake, and the greatest Commonwealth that the world

has ever seen was, to the lasting injury of mankind, rent in pieces by men who knew not what they did.

Now I said at the outset that neither you, I, nor anyone can undertake to decide how Canada, Britain, South Africa or any other community is to act. That is the thing which will be decided in each of them by the court of public opinion. I use the term court advisedly, because for a court to arrive at a decision which is sound and wise, each party must present their case in an intelligent way. That, I submit, is the true responsibility of men in a free community when confronted by a great problem. Their first duty is to understand the problem for themselves, to master the alternatives it presents, and above all to decide which alternative they think ought to be followed. Then I hold that it is their duty to do everything in their power to make the public understand these alternatives and the reason why they should adopt one rather than another. In such a task the first step is for men who agree to combine, and having combined they should do everything in their power to make it possible for everyone with whom they can get in touch to grasp the issues and consider them on their merits. Now you will agree with me that it is never so difficult to get a question considered on its merits as when the alternatives presented have become identified with party programmes which include a vast number of other items. The first object in any such organization should therefore be to keep this question outside party politics in every one of these countries. Assuming as I am that my own position on this question is correct, you will realize how important it is that people at large should be allowed to consider their ultimate status as citizens without reference to the fact that they are Liberals or Conservatives.

Suppose we are right in thinking that unless people in the Dominions acquire the joint control of foreign affairs they must end by assuming a separate control, assuming, that is to say, independence, it is of the most vital importance that the project of acquiring a joint control should not become the recognized fighting platform of either faction. The moment it does so, the other party will almost certainly be led, as a party, to fight against it. By the logic of events they will, little by little, find themselves driven into putting forward an alternative proposal and into identifying themselves as a party with it. If I am right in the diagnosis of this problem that I have made, it would mean that the other political party would gradually be pushed into advocating independence. A great number of people who have been born and bred in the traditions of their party will be prevented from ever approaching the question on its merits at all.

When I say this to practical politicians they generally reply that to get a thing done you must, sooner or later, make it a question of party politics. On the whole, that is true where you are dealing with internal and domestic problems, but when you are dealing with external affairs, it is absolutely untrue. Domestic politics in England have never been more bitter than they are at the present moment, but on foreign politics the leaders of both parties have never before been so absolutely united. The moment you begin to handle this problem in the Dominions you are beginning to handle foreign politics and in the only way in which you can begin to handle them effectively. You are addressing yourself to the task of creating a machinery through which you can handle them, and that task, as I have already said, involves a constitutional reconstruction. In the experience of

Canada, the operation is not a new one. In order to achieve control of Canadian affairs, your predecessors found it necessary to merge the provinces in one great Dominion and they succeeded because, on both sides, there were men large enough to rise so far above minor issues that they met on common ground at the moment of a great national crisis. The Dominion of Canada was the joint work of Liberal and Conservative, of British and of French leaders; so it was in Australia; so it was in South Africa; so it was in America, and so it will be in this immeasurably greater task before us now. If the Imperial problem is to find its solution in the foresight and constructive purpose of free men, if these vast issues are not in the end to be decided by the results of indifference drifting to catastrophe, it will be so decided, because the best elements in either party have grasped the issues at stake, have seen that they are greater than any which divide their factions, and have united to apply the proper solution. I submit, therefore, that any association formed for the purpose of educating public opinion on this subject should, as an association, treat it as an object of primary importance to keep the issue from becoming a party one. That I believe such an association can do, provided it confines itself strictly to educative work. The organization of which I am thinking is one which would set itself to induce the more educated classes not only to read the documents in which its creed had been worked out, but to join the association and induce others to read them. It would organize lectures for the less educated classes and use every possible means of getting an understanding of its views diffused throughout the community irrespective of party. It would, if it is to be worth anything, include Liberals and Conservatives, each of whom would be expected

in their individual capacity to do their best to prevent the parties to which they belong from treating the question as a party issue.

Now I come to what I think it should not do, and I will illustrate what I mean by your present situation here. Several people suggested to me that the Round Table groups should decide whether to support the policy of beginning naval preparations by establishing a new wing of the Imperial navy, or whether they should support the project of a Canadian navy. That in any case would, I think, be unjustifiable during the stage of inquiry. Individual members of the Round Table are free as air to support whichever policy they think best. But I see no justification for the organization, as a whole, doing so, and in my opinion the same would apply to any organization formed for educating public opinion on what I have called the ultimate issue. Imagine such an association to exist at the present moment, and you will see at once what would happen. Suppose it decided, as an association, to back the government's policy, the immediate effect would be to exclude from its ranks all the adherents of the opposition. There would be nothing in the world to prevent the individual members of the association, whether Liberal or Conservative, taking whatever course they judged best in the field of active politics. Once let the association enter that field it will close against itself its own proper field—that of educating public opinion on matters which are not as yet the subject of party controversies and ought never to become so. It must fix men's eyes on the true goal of citizenship. It must convince them that they cannot stop short of that goal if they are to preserve that citizenship at all. It must make them understand why they should reach it, and above all what sacrifices they must make to do so. But I submit that it cannot

undertake to prescribe the precise steps by which it is to be reached, still less what time those steps are to take. Convinced as I am that co-operation offers no final solution of the Imperial problem, I am equally clear that it is only through co-operation that a final solution can be reached, and personally I would not attempt to predict how short or long the intermediate steps must be, nor even what they must be. Scattered as we are up and down the world we can combine to pursue a common end provided the combination leaves its members to choose their several paths and to tread them at their own pace.

You may say, perhaps, what is the use of educating people for a decision unless you are going to call upon them to decide? Well, I have confessed to you already that my own greatest fear is that either events may decide this question or may force the decision on electorates in all these countries before the real magnitude of the issues at stake has been grasped by a sufficient number to ensure an intelligent decision. You will agree with me that when you have reached your conclusions and worked out your creed, several years at least of strenuous work are needed in order to make that creed widely understood. Let us do the thing in front of us which calls out to be done, with all our strength and with a single mind, and be thankful for whatever time is given us in which to do it. The first sign that you have really succeeded in your work will be that public opinion itself will begin to demand that a decision be taken. People in the Dominions will realize that their position is one of dependence intolerable to free men. If you stick to educative work in a free community you cannot succeed without bringing about a decision of the issue at stake as soon as public opinion is ready to take it. What we must pray for is that tremendous and swiftly moving events, which

we have as yet no power to control, may not rush upon us like a thief in the night and precipitate a crisis which public opinion has not yet been prepared to face. That was what happened in 1775. It is my firm conviction that had groups of men in the American colonies and in Britain set themselves, on the morrow of the Seven Years' War, to do what the Round Table groups are doing now, that is to say, to work out the real issues, to bring them home to their fellow-citizens, and to show what changes and what sacrifices were necessary to meet them, the immeasurable catastrophe which followed would have been avoided; there would to-day have been a mighty commonwealth centering, not in the Old World, but the New. The opportunity is, I believe, presented to us now of preventing a recurrence of that catastrophe, and feeble as our means and numbers may seem, I believe that we can prevent it, if only we have the patience and firmness of purpose to follow to their issue, the principles upon which we have set out.

